

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Germany (Western Zones)

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SUBJECT Meeting of the Society for
the Re-Uniting of Germany

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SUPPLEMENT TO
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Among the invited guests who attended were:

Professor Will Hellpach, Heidelberg, former Staatspräsident of Baden.

Seeger, Hamburg.

Generaldirektor Haffner, Salamander Shoe Company, Stuttgart.

von Blücher, former Ambassador.

Dr. Günther Decker, formerly in the Reich Foreign Ministry.

Dr. Heinrich Lübke, former Agriculture Minister of North Rhine Westphalia.

Lothar von Richthofen, reported to be with a Mainz newspaper.

Dr. Harald Roos, Economic Editor of Der Tag, Berlin newspaper founded by Jakob Kaiser.

Prof. Albrecht, Marburg.

Zwicknagel, from the Kali syndikat.

Prenzel, Kalisyndikat.

Hansen.

Noack (not the famous Professor Noack), a CSU man from Salmbach, Bavaria.

Dr. Schäuse, Personal Referent of Dr. Günther Gereke, Lower Saxony Agriculture Minister.

Uli Steiner, Laubheim.

Frau Wilma Mönkeberg, of the German headquarters of the World Mother Movement.

Ernst Lemmer, editor of the Berlin "Kurier" wired that he could not come.

3. The founding committee held preliminary discussions on Friday, 20 January, the day before the main meeting, and the general discussion plan was formulated.
4. The main meeting was opened with an address by Dr. Hermes, who outlined the aims of the Society. He first noted with regret the unfavorable reaction in Germany and abroad to the Nadolny circle meetings of March 1949. The division of Germany into four zones, the crowding of about 7,500,000 refugees into the Western Zones, and the loss of the agricultural surpluses in Eastern Germany led to an intolerable situation. Only the help supplied by the U S had enabled Western Germany to survive thus far.

5. The splitting of Germany had its origin, he said, in the falling out between the Eastern and Western occupying powers and in the unfounded belief of some of these powers that a divided Germany would be a guarantee of security. The desperate condition in which Germany finds herself, he stated, was underlined by the difficulties which the Federal government was facing and by the "impossible" happenings in the Bundestag.

6. Hermes expressed regret over the attitude of the press toward his movement. It was neither nationalistic nor bolshevistic, but merely emphasized the belief that the re-uniting and independence of Germany was a prerequisite for the unity of Europe. Since many prominent men in Germany disassociated themselves from politics, it was all the more necessary that independent but politically conscious men like this group busy themselves keeping the German public and foreign nations, especially the Americans, aware of German claims and the German right to live (Lebensrecht). Their goal was a united Europe, not a united Western Europe. The great help America was giving Germany only concealed the real problem.

7. To remedy the situation, he proposed that the Society adopt the following program of positive action:

Political, economic, and cultural study (Aufklärung) of internal and external affairs, especially in the Soviet Zone.

Exchange of information and experiences between Western and Eastern Zones.

Conventions of suitable persons.

No exertion of pressure on present political groups or the government.

The Society would not seek to monopolize its theories, but would concentrate on spreading the doctrine that a united Germany was the first step toward peace in Europe.

8. Dr. Harald Roos, economic editor of the paper "Der Tag", Berlin, spoke mainly on the economic situation in the Soviet Zone. He mentioned the Volkspolizei, the extent of Soviet reparations demands, the importance of Berlin's economic ties with the West. He stressed the importance of increasing interzonal trade to raise the presently marginal living standard of Soviet Zone workers. After noting that the splitting of Germany was initially approved by the U S government under Roosevelt, he stated that present U S officials in Germany really wished to re-unite the country. The Bonn government, he complained, had no plan for reintegrating the Soviet Zone and contented itself with sympathy meetings and demonstrations. He emphasized his rejection of the policies of the Soviet Zone government, calling them identical with the policy of the USSR.

9. Von Prittwitz-Gaffron spoke on the foreign policy implications of the movement. After describing the political barriers being raised between East and West and showing how increased trade served to pierce these barriers, he returned to the theme that a united Germany was essential to European order. All steps which postponed the re-uniting of Germany, like joining the Atlantic Pact or remilitarizing Germany, must be avoided, but at the same time he rejected the theory of neutralization of Germany, as advanced by Noack and his Mauheim Circle. If neutralization were to be realized, it must include all Europe, as a bridge between East and West. He viewed the Bonn government as a necessary evil. A peace treaty was the first step toward the re-uniting of Germany. The aim was to be a united Germany in a united Europe, he concluded, and added the slogan: "The German heart is indivisible".

10. After these policy statements by some of the leading participants, Dr. Hermes opened the discussion period. Dr. Binder began by asking how cooperation with the Federal government could best be achieved, and the ensuing discussion was inconclusive and indefinite.

11. Nadolny took the floor and dealt with some of the effects of Soviet policy in the Soviet Zone. Russian policy there had had the fortunate effect of solidifying the rejection of bolshevism by the entire German population. Germany was the true bulwark against bolshevism, but some Western powers, especially France, did not appreciate this and they failed to shape policy in support of the struggle against Russian domination. Only America showed understanding for this thesis, he went on. His final remarks were a legal analysis of the Oder-Neisse line, which showed the complete illegality of the new boundary.

12. Ex-Minister Lübke spoke next, dealing with the grave social situation in the Soviet Zone. A single currency for West and East was essential, even though dumping practices would have to be dealt with. Improvement of conditions in the Soviet Zone would slow the flow of refugees into the Western Zones and thus improve conditions here.

13. Frau Mühlberg spoke generally on the necessity of carrying the argument to the women of Germany, whose political influence and inherent political neutrality could make them the ideal go-betweens between communism and capitalism. Her views were received with polite but unenthusiastic applause.

14. Von Richthofen, after rejecting all insinuations that the Society was communistic or nationalistic, said that no concrete proposals for action could yet be made. Now that the goals were set, the problem of organization had to be dealt with. He advocated a large organization with more potent plans than mere discussion. Hermes answered that the present Society was only a beginning.

15. Dr. Schäuss further answered von Richthofen by saying no large organization should yet be set up. The first task was that of overcoming public distrust. Disputes on the Oder-Neisse line question would only lead to a third World War. It would be better to begin by strengthening Western Germany and helping Eastern Germany through more trade. He proposed pressure on officials in all zones and encouragement of exchange of press information. He further proposed cooperation with the Mauheim Circle, but the assembled members rejected the idea at once. (Note: Schäuss represented Dr. Gereke, Lower Saxony Agriculture Minister, who has often been associated with movements advocating cooperation with the Soviet Zone.)

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16. The final address was made by Professor Hellpach of Heidelberg, who began by quoting the 19th century German historian Treitschke: "Those who have striven for world domination have been thrown at the feet of the world at large by the relentless power of a just Fate". He summarized the violent history of the last sixty years, mentioning the Habsburg monarchy, the First World War, and the Versailles Treaty, and noted that today, instead of one, there are three (sic) German Reichs. As to organization, he remarked that in difficult times, small groups are needed for sober and objective consideration of conditions.

17. To close the meeting, the charter of the society was read and a press release given to reporters. Binder made a few trivial remarks to the assembled newspaper men.

18. Another meeting of members was contemplated about two months hence.

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[redacted]
the next meeting would be a conference of Eastern and Western agriculture experts and would take place in Goslar on 27 February.) Temporary headquarters of the Society would be in Rhöndorf, where Nadolny resides.

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[redacted] Comment:

1. Although the significance of the movement and the attitudes of members cannot be judged from one meeting alone, it appeared that the members were all anti-communistic, although the latent wish to distinguish between communism and the USSR could be felt from some quarters. On the whole, the tone of the meeting was also democratic and not nationalistic, at least in the usual sense.

2. The group was made up, beside the politicians and professors, largely of representatives of business, who in all likelihood have their own agricultural or industrial interests partly in mind when urging increased trade with the Soviet Zone. (No SPD representatives were in evidence.) It was rumored that these business circles lent financial support to the meeting.

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[redacted] Director Haffner of the Salamander A. G. as a financial contributor to the Society.) Hermes is obviously the mainspring of the movement, and Nadolny, made shy by the hostile reception he met in Western Germany last year, stays more in the background.

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3. In general, the group hopes for some peaceful solution of the problem of German disunity. It is surmised, for example, that Poland may be annexed de jure by the USSR and that the Oder-Neisse line may be given up. All cooperation with such groups as the newly formed Deutsche Reichspartei would be unthinkable, members of the group stated.

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4. The eventual significance of the Society will depend, [redacted] on the skill of its members and the type of organization they choose. It could become a meaningless political debating club or an important political force. A grave cause for misgiving was the absence of a youth element in the membership. Hardly any younger people were present.

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Comment:

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1. Another [redacted]

[redacted] viewed the Bad Homburg convention as primarily a meeting of the "dissatisfied Agrarians". The latter are very much concerned about the increase in the imports of agricultural products from Western Europe, especially because the price of French and Italian food products is generally below the German domestic price level. [redacted] a definite connection between the overt efforts of Hermes and his "Bauernverband" to keep trade with France down, some of the anti-French statements made at Bad Homburg (although not by Hermes himself) and the known reluctance of Federal Agriculture Minister Niklas to conclude a trade treaty with France. It should be noted that Niklas and Hermes are old friends, that Hermes was chairman of the Food and Agriculture Committee of the Bizonal Wirtschaftsrat, and that Hermes, although he has no official position, still maintains an office in the building of the Agriculture Ministry.

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2.

All [redacted] agree that the Bad Homburg meeting had a definite anti-communist character. There is also general agreement that the Hermes-Nadolny group, as presently constituted, intends to support generally the Western German Federation. It may be of interest to note that while the communist press has been generally tolerant of Nadolny's activities in the past, the newly-formed "Society for the Re-uniting of Germany" was sharply denounced, the "Sozialistische Volksstimme" (the Communist Party newspaper in Hesse) claiming that the new organization did nothing but split again the national German forces in order to prevent the "National Front" from being successful.

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